

Information for People with Chronic Hepatitis B Infection

How to Take Care of Yourself and Others

People with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection (having HBV for more than six months) are known as carriers. Carriers who get HBV at a young age have an increased risk of liver disease as adults. Most HBV carriers do not feel or look sick, but still need to see their doctor at least once a year for follow-up care.

Carriers may feel healthy, but they can still give HBV to others. Carriers must protect others from their blood, or other body fluids such as semen and vaginal fluids. HBV is not spread by sneezing, coughing, or by casual contact such as holding hands or hugging.

What you can do to take care of yourself

- See your doctor for a check-up at least once a year
- Review all medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and alternative) with your doctor
- Discuss with your doctor about getting periodic ultrasounds, alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) blood tests, or other studies to make sure there is no evidence of a developing liver cancer
- Don't drink alcohol because it can further damage your liver, especially when used with acetaminophen (an ingredient found in cold and headache remedies)
- Don't eat raw oysters
- Get the hepatitis A vaccinations and all other immunizations that may be needed

What you can do to protect others

- If you are pregnant, tell your doctor that you have HBV so your baby can get the hepatitis B (hepB) vaccine and hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) at birth
- Cover all cuts and open sores
- Properly dispose of all items such as tissues, menstrual pads and tampons, so others don't come into contact with any blood or body fluids
- Wash hands well after touching your blood or body fluids
- Clean up blood spills with one part bleach to ten parts water
- Make sure all household and sexual partners are tested and treated
- Tell your sexual partner(s) that you have HBV and continue to use a latex condom until they have had a blood test and are fully vaccinated, if needed
- Let your doctor and dentist know that you have HBV
- Do **NOT** share food or gum that has been in your mouth
- Do **NOT** share toothbrushes, razors, tattooing and body piercing equipment, earrings, nail files, clippers, or anything that may have come into contact with your blood or body fluids
- Do **NOT** share syringes or needles
- Do **NOT** donate blood, plasma, body organs, tissue, sperm or eggs